THE SPEAKER'S SPEECH.

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SPEECH

OF THE

RIGHT HONORABLE

JOHN FOSTER,

SPEAKER

OF THE

HOUSE OF COMMONS OF IRELAND,

DELIVERED IN COMMITTEE,

ON

MONDAY THE 17TH DAY OF FEBRUARY, 1800.

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1800.

SPEECH, &c.

HAVING ſtated my objections fully laſt year, I ſhould hold myſelf inexcuſable were I now to treſpaſs as largely on the indulgence of the committee; I ſhall therefore be as ſhort as poſſible and avoid the repetition of any thing I have already urged. I am glad that the advocates of the meaſure have laid aſide all thoſe high ſounding general expreſſions of conſolidating, identifying, and ſo forth, which they formerly uſed inſtead of argument, and which conveyed no meaning or idea to the underſtanding. However, inſtead of perſevering in thoſe empty phraſes, they have reſorted to a new mode, painful to me, as an Iriſhman, to hear, they degrade the character of their native country, and not content with the moſt humiliating and unfounded deſcription of it at the preſent day, they go back and ranſack hiſtory, with a wiſh to ſhew that we are a ſavage and reſtleſs people, devoted to eternal feuds, with uncivilized manners and conſtant internal broils and jealouſies.

What is the intent of this, ſir, is it for the purpoſe of ingratiating the people of Great Britain and Ireland with each other? is it for the purpoſe of producing reciprocal reſpect and attachment?—no,—it is to impoſe on the public an unfounded impreſſion that our ſituation is ſo bad, our people ſo debaſed, and our feuds ſo rooted, that any change, even though attended with the loſs of our liberties, muſt be deſirable. Can thoſe who now hear me, deny, that ſince the period of 1782, this country has riſen in civilization, wealth and manufactures, until interrupted by the preſent war, in a greater proportion and with a more rapid progreſs than any other country in Europe, and much more than it ever did itſelf in a like period before? and what has this improvement been owing to, but the ſpirit, the content and enterprize which a free conſtitution inſpired? to depreſs which ſpirit and to take away which conſtitution, are the objects of the preſent meaſure.

Theſe advocates go farther, they deny that our conſtitution is free, or that it is poſſible to enjoy liberty under it. I admit that this kingdom is dependant on the crown of Britain, it is our boaſt and happineſs that it is ſo, but it is dependant only on the crown and not on the kingdom. The great ſeal of England is neceſſary to our acts of legiſlature, and they ſay that ſeal is uſed through a Britiſh miniſter, not amenable, to us, and therefore that we are dependant. The withholding the royal aſſent is the only act he can do contrary to our wiſhes, and I bid every man recollect whether it has been ever withheld to our injury, ſince the conſtitution of 1782, its happening is therefore almoſt theoretical, and as no legiſlature but our own, can make a law to bind us, we have only theoretic dependence, but practical independence, whereas

whereas if we adopt the propoſed Union, and give up our parliament, we ſhall reverſe our ſituation, and have a theoretic independence with a practical and ſure dependence, we ſhall be brought back to the miſerable ſtate in which we were, when governed by the laws of another parliament, ſitting in another land, ruled by their will, not by our own; our purſe, our trade, our properties, our very liberties at their diſpoſal, and under their controul.

Such have been the endeavours to vilify our ſituation, to make us believe every temporary ill, and even the horrors of the late rebellion were produced by it, and a Legiſlative Union was preſcribed as the only effectual remedy. When we objected to it, we were told triumphantly, wait till you ſee the terms, their liberality will aſtoniſh you; their immenſe benefits will ſilence the ſtrongeſt opponents. And is the caſe ſo? Far from it.

By the noble lord's clear and explicit detail the whole plan is now before us, and the manner in which the houſe expreſſed its ſurprize on hearing the terms, a ſurpriſe not at their liberality or wiſdom, but at their emptineſs and injurious tendency, gave the noble lord no flattering hope of their having made any favorable impreſſion. On the contrary, I will ſhew that they offer no benefits, but are replete with injury, that every article they contain, if deſirable, can be as well, if not better, eſtabliſhed by ſeparate parliaments; that they all contain in them the ſeeds of conſtant jealouſy, and avow ſeparate diſtinct intereſts, the continuance of which they enſure, and that by thoſe

jealouſies

jealouſies, and arouſing thoſe diſtinct intereſts, they muſt promote Separation, not Union.

It is curious to obſerve the noble lord's arguments laſt year and now: our growing wealth was then held out by him as tending to render us too difficult to be governed by our preſent conſtitution; that with its growth our wealth, our conſequence, our power, and our pride would encreaſe, and there was the greater hurry for taking away our parliament, as that growth was advancing with rapid ſtrides; now our poverty is made the pretence,—we muſt take the Union to ſave us from bankruptcy; we have not the means to go on for three years; we have overpaid our due proportion of the war expence by a million a year, and of the peace expence by half a million. We have almoſt ruined the kingdom by this profuſion, and Britain in propoſing the meaſure, means to give us that million and half million, and hereafter to tax herſelf to pay it.

Can any rational man believe ſuch a ſtory, or by which of theſe contradictory arguments will the noble lord abide? I have too good an opinion of his head and heart to believe he could ſeriouſly intend to impoſe or expect that we could believe him—believe, that our loyalty in ſtraining every nerve to ſupport the empire in its diſtreſſes, is to be made an excuſe for annihilating a parliament that was ſo zealous.

I own we have granted largely, perhaps we have not meaſured our grants by our means ſo much as by our zeal to uphold Great Britain; but are we for this

to

to be puniſhed, and our parliament tranſported like a felon for its extravagant efforts to maintain Britiſh connexion by maintaining the cauſe of Britain?— Did the noble lord ſit by during the two laſt ſeſſions, the moſt expenſive we ever ſaw, during which he has directed the public affairs of Ireland, and not only ſee but urge us to give the ſupplies we have done, meaning at a future day to make that liberality of ours, and thoſe cordial effuſions of our loyalty, ſo many arguments for taking away our parliament and annihilating our conſtitution? Did he receive our ſupplies for four quarters pay of the Britiſh militia, which was more our voluntary offer than his aſking? Did he take advantage of our chearfulneſs in that grant, to deſire a further one, and offer a new eſtimate for a fifth quarter in the preceding year, and mean to treat us all the while, in the language uſed by a great man formerly in this houſe, like the innocent and induſtrious Bee, where we made an offer of our honey, predetermining to ſmother us? No one could urge ſo ſtrong a charge againſt his conduct as he makes himſelf, in this aſſertion; where was his miniſterial vigilance, where his duty, when he ſaw us running to ruin and urged us to proceed? No, ſir, this argument of his ſeems to be a part of the general plan to vilify the parliament in the eyes of the people, to tell the people that this houſe has granted their money too faſt, that they muſt diſcard us and lodge their purſe in the hands of the Britiſh parliament, who will be more natural and more faithful guardians of it.

Is there any child ſo weak as to believe he is in earneſt, or that he means to load England to ſave Ireland? And how is this million to be given us? In money.

Are

Are our paſt advances to be repaid us? No. Or are taxes to the amount to be taken off? No. He gives us calculation, nothing but calculation. Suppoſe however the incredible fact, that we have been fooliſhly liberal, what has a Union to ſay to it? Is it impoſſible for the Iriſh parliament to check its grants, and muſt we reſort to Weſtminſter to examine our reſources and limit our ſupplies?

Away with all this ſilly impoſition, and if its own emptineſs don't expoſe it ſufficiently, I will go into his detail, and ſhew you that the Union, inſtead of ſaving us expence, would encreaſe it.

The noble lord ſtates the relative ability of the two countries to bear taxation to be as $7\frac{1}{2}$ to 1; and ſtates the peace expences to be as $5\frac{3}{4}$ to 1; and the war expences as 9 to 1, and taking the proportion of the years of war to the years of peace during the preſent century, he ſtrikes the medium of $7\frac{1}{2}$ to 1, which he eſtabliſhes as the proportion of contribution, and Ireland is conſequently to pay $\frac{2}{17}$ and England $\frac{15}{17}$ of the whole annual aggregate expence of both kingdoms.

He ſtates the expences of Britain to have been in the year, (I ſuppoſe the laſt year,) 32,700.000l. and I take his ſtatement as true—but I cannot find any paper which juſtifies his account of Ireland's expences, I will therefore take them for the laſt year, which has been aſcertained by the report of the committee of accounts; a year in which they were unuſually great, owing

owing to the extenſive rebellion and the invaſion which took place, and they appear by the return of the iſſues from the treaſury for all ſervice, civil, military and extraordinary to have been 4,709,254l. or in Britiſh money, - - - - - 4,347,000

Making together - - 37,047,000

$\frac{2}{17}$ whereof being 4,358,470 would have been our proportion had his Union been in force, which exceeds by a trifle the ſum we did actually pay.

But he goes further, for in his calculation he ſtates that our war proportion would be, Britiſh, 4,492,000 which exceeds the ſum paid by us of - 4,347,000 and conſequently by his own ſtatement of his beneficial arrangement which is to ſave us a million, we ſhould pay more than we actually did pay to the amount of - - - 145,000 or in Iriſh money - - - 157,000

But we have a better criterion than ſpeculative calculation to ſhew what would have been our actual ſituation on the 25th March laſt, had this Union proportion taken place at the beginning of the war.

Great Britain in ſix years to 5th January, 1799, increaſed her debt in the ſum of - 186,000,000
Ireland in ſix years to 25th of March, 1799, encreaſed hers 15,092,000, or in Britiſh money, nearly - - 14,000,000

Making together - - - 200,000,000
$\frac{2}{17}$ whereof or Ireland's proportion would have been from 23,530,000, or in Iriſh money, nearly - - - 25,500,009
But Ireland increaſed her debts only - 15,092,000

And the exceſs - - 10,408,000 would

would have been an additional debt, incurred by Ireland, had this bleſſed Union taken place in 1793— an additional debt, which if averaged on the ſix years, makes an increaſed charge in each of 1,734,666l. and this is one of the ways in which the noble lord would give us a million a year.

Again, Great Britain has impoſed, during thoſe ſix years, new permanent taxes to the nett amount of ſeven and a half millions a year, $\frac{2}{17}$ whereof muſt have been raiſed by Ireland, amounting annually to 882,352l. Britiſh, or 955,881l. Iriſh, and this is another way the noble lord in the generoſity of his projected Union would give us a million a year.

Further, Great Britain has raiſed by temporary taxes, on imports and exports, and on income (or by mortgaging them) to the amount of eleven and a half millions a year, $\frac{2}{17}$ whereof, or 1,352,940 Britiſh, making 1,465,685 Iriſh, would have been Ireland's annual proportion.

Thus had we been fortunate enough to have been united under the noble lord's plan, in 1793, we ſhould in the firſt place, have been in debt,

in March laſt - - -	10,408,000
more than we were, being an increaſe by the year of - - -	1,734,666

2ndly

2ndly, we ſhould have had permanent taxes impoſed to the annual nett produce of - - - - 955,881

And 3rdly, we ſhould have been forced laſt year to have impoſed further taxes, to the nett annual amount of - - 1,465,685

Making together - - 4,156,239

Whereas if we take the calculations the noble lord relies on for ſhewing the revenues of the year, which I do in compliment to him for the preſent purpoſe of compariſon only, the revenue of Ireland in 1799, exceeded that in 1793 by 700,000l. which being deducted from the foregoing, leaves 3,356,239l. annual encreaſe. He would leſſen our annual expence one million a year, by increaſing it near three millions and a half, and this is the way his project is to relieve us and this is the generous and kind arrangement to ſave us expence.

Obſerve too, that the noble lord, to elucidate how near we are to bankruptcy, tells us we are running in debt faſter than England; I have ſhewn you the amount of each kingdom's increaſe of debt during the war, Ireland 14,000,000l. Britiſh, England 186,000,000l. we run only at the rate of one million for twelve and a half of hers, but he tells us we ſhould have gone ſlower, if we had quickened our pace, ſo as to go one for every ſeven and a half.

And now I may diſmiſs his war calculations, and I truſt I have made it clear to mathematical demonſtration, that if this nation had been bleſſed with this Union and its liberal œconomiſing proportion for Ireland, by his pretended free gift of one million a year,

we ſhould have been near 11,000,000l. more in debt than we are, and we ſhould now be forced to raiſe about two million and a half a year taxes, more than we do at preſent, and we ſhould have received no part of his boaſted free gifts.

Let us now go to his peace eſtabliſhment, which he ſtates at 1,500,000l. when the preſent war ſhall ceaſe, but for which he produces no reaſonable grounds; on the contrary, he allows the laſt peace eſtabliſhment to have been only 1,012,000l. and there is no reaſon to ſuppoſe all œconomy muſt ceaſe, and that every war is to make the peace eſtabliſhment half as large again, as it was before.

Let me remind you that in 1785, you determined by a reſolution I had the honour to propoſe, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, that the revenue ſhould be made equal to the expences. You accordingly granted near 150,000l. a year new taxes, the debt then including 200,000l. voted, was 2,381,501l. and in 1793 at the end of the peace it was only 2,344,314l.—this ſhews you at once that the peace eſtabliſhment was ſufficient, and it is a conſpicuous proof of the efficacy and wiſdom of the parliament which you are called on to tranſport as a culprit, that it was capable of adhering during the whole peace to a ſteady ſyſtem of œconomy, which advanced the trade and wealth of the kingdom—and yet the noble lord tells you, that the kingdom cannot go on under its direction, nor any ſufficient ſyſtem of governing the nation be eſtabliſhed while it continues, becauſe a rebellion broke out which it has cruſhed, and an invaſion took place which has been repelled, and he tells you the Catholics are at variance with the Proteſtant,

teſtant, becauſe they are joining with them to oppoſe his Union.

He takes the produce of all the taxes laſt year to 25th March, 1799, at 1,860,000l. becauſe ſuch was the amount received at the treaſury, but by ſome fatality he forgets that the treaſury permitted the revenue collector's balances to encreaſe, ſo as to be 257,822l. more at the end of the year, than at the beginning of it. This increaſe muſt have been part of the income of the year, and might have been received if called for, it ſhould therefore be added to the treaſury receipts, and the whole year's nett revenue would be 2,118,000l. He eſtimates the permanent encreaſe of the revenue in 1800, at 450,000l. and he totally omits the lotteries which may be reckoned at about 70,000l. profit, making altogether an income of 2,638,000l.
The charges of the debt I ſtate with him at 1,400,000l.

which leaves - - 1,238,000l.

for peace eſtabliſhment, and ſhould this not prove ſufcient, much more may be obtained by a better collection, aand we ſhould remember that this eſtimate of the revenues is taken from a year of rebellion and invaſion.

Where then is the mighty phantom of encreaſed taxation, with which he would frighten us into his project, or where is the national bankruptcy with which he ſo kindly threatens us? One inference naturally occurs from this ſtatement of the future peace expences by the noble lord, that the whole train of the kingdom's expences is to remain, the lord lieutenant, the ſtate, the whole civil liſt, the offices, the exchequer, in ſhort every thing but your parliament, and I cannot too often or too

ſtrongly preſs upon you this truth, that the real queſtion of the Union, is, *parliament or no parliament!*—it is our parliament they want to remove, and nothing elſe.

I have throughout followed his mode of calculation in order to render the compariſon of my ſtatement with his, the more eaſy, and I have for that reaſon admitted his return of the debt at the total capital created, I mean at 17 millions, which the treaſury ſtates, inſtead of 13 millions, which the accountant general ſtates, and which the committee of ſupply has voted as the whole due at Lady day, 1799—and I have carried that principle with him, throughout all the calculations, becauſe he preferred it, and they are made in Britiſh money.

I have alſo admitted his ratio of one to ſeven and a half, for the contribution, though he allows the real ratio is in war as one to nine.—War expences are much larger than thoſe of peace, at his own calculations nearly as five one-half to one, but really four three-fourths to one; where then is the fairneſs of our paying two-fifteenth inſtead of two-twentieths, when the expences are 4,700,000l. a year, and making a ſaving in return where they were only 1,000,000l. and are to be at the utmoſt only 1,500,000l. particularly as there are but two years of ſaving or peace, calculated for one of loſs or war.

Again he ſays, he eſtimates the proportion on the joint grounds of commerce and conſumption, but omits all internal commerce which is much greater than the external, and even in the external he omits to calculate the tonnage of the ſhipping belonging to each kingdom, and reſts ſolely on the value of the imports and exports, without regard to which country receives the profits of the carriage, though they conſtitute a material part of the value; and in conſumption he omits the article of ſalt, which is one of very general uſe; the groſs

groſs duties on it in the laſt year were 800,000l. in Britain, and 90,000 in Ireland, or nearly one to nine. The ſtamp duties ariſing from exchange of property, litigation and inſurance, ſhew in ſome ſort the reſpective abilities; their groſs amount in Great Britain laſt year was 2,000,000l. excluſive of poſt horſes, hair powder licenſe, &c. not adopted here, or not affecting property in its tranſit, and in Ireland only 137,000l. or as one to fifteen, yet theſe he has omitted. The poſt office alſo, was adopted by many of his friends in England as a criterion for the growing wealth of Scotland, and I wonder at its eſcaping his attention. It produced laſt year in Britain 874,000l. in Ireland 80,000l. about one to ten.

What effect any of theſe might have, if added in order to form a mean proportion, I wont ſay, but I am ſure no means ſhould be omitted, which can be relied on to aſcertain ſo material a point of negotiation, as the contribution.

I have now done with the dry ſubject of calculation, and I will aſk, were all the mighty benefits of revenue true, how are they to be conferred? The Union won't change the total maſs of expence of both nations in the war; no ſhip will be laid by, no regiment diſbanded on account of it, all the force muſt remain while the war continues—if then Ireland is to pay leſs, Britain muſt pay more; if ſhe is to ſave Ireland from threatened bankruptcy, ſhe is thereby to draw herſelf cloſer to it. Where then is our benefit? We muſt ſupport her, for if ſhe falls, Ireland falls with her; conſequently this ſuppoſed transfer will not ſerve us, if it weakens her. But it is all a deluſion; can any man in his ſenſes think that the miniſter can call on Great Britain

tain really to raiſe a million a year, to give it to Ireland who has not complained and is willing herſelf to ſhew her own zeal? Who deprecates the kindneſs and wants to refuſe his offers? Beſides, were it actually and bonâ fide to be given to Ireland, this proportion is to laſt only twenty years, or thereabout, perhaps not near ſo long, and twenty years is a ſhort period in the life of a nation. Well might a ſagacious miniſter with long forecaſt, give a little boon during twenty years, in order to get an entire command of the purſe of a great nation ever after, and the time when it is finally to ceaſe is choſen with the moſt unfavourable proſpect to any little remains of our proſperity which may then exiſt. This proportion ſo favourably made for us in the noble lord's opinion, is to be at an end, and we are to undergo equal taxation, inſtead of paying only one part for every ſeven and a half of hers, when the exiſting debt of Britain ſhall be cleared.

He acknowledges that the proportion is excluſive of every conſideration of reſpective debts, which preſs heavier on Britain than Ireland, and he admits that this proportion in favour of Ireland is neceſſary, even while Britain is incumbered with the weight of taxes, to pay the charges of her gteat debt. Where then is the juſtice or policy that at the moment theſe charges ceaſe, and all her neceſſaries of life and manufactures are freed from the weighty incumbrance and new vigour thereby given to her efforts as a commercial nation, we are to loſe the benefit which we ſhould then have moſt need of to keep us up? There is neither juſtice, wiſdom nor liberality in ſuch an arrangement.

The next ſubject is that of commerce, and he ſays that the regulations he propoſes are formed on the commercial propoſitions which this houſe agreed to in 1785, and even in ſome inſtances exceed them.

Sir, I may ſay I framed thoſe propoſitions, and I ſhould have been aſhamed to have propoſed them if they had contained ſo little benefit, and ſo much injury towards this country as thoſe he now offers to you. They reduced the duties on the importation of the articles of groſs produce or manufacture from one kingdom into the other, where they were higher in one, to the amount payable in the other. As our duties were almoſt univerſally lower, *every protection given by duty to our manufactures would therefore have remained*, and the reſult would have been, that *our* duties would have been the ſtandard; in ſhort, as the higher Britiſh duties were inoperative, the object was to leave the intercourſe in general in a ſort of ſtatu quo, ſo far as duties affected it; but what do theſe terms declare? that *every duty exiſting in Ireland on Britiſh manufacture is either to be reduced immediately to ten per cent. or totally to ceaſe.* Let us examine the articles that will be affected by this reduction.

I take thoſe in his lordſhips ſchedule, No. 2. *Apparel* will be reduced from 12*l.* 14*s.* 1*d.* Britiſh, to ten per cent. and its import has increaſed rapidly under the larger duties.* *Copper wrought* will receive a like reduction, its import is not large, but as it is in general uſe, we

* *The average annual imports for the four years ending in* 1795 *was* 2104*l. and for the four years in* 1799, 5328*l. and in the very laſt year* 1799, *it was* 6383*l. encreaſing on the average of the laſt four years in nearly half of its former total amount.*

we know not how far the removing the preſent protection of 2l. 14s. 1d. Britiſh, may encreaſe it.

Glaſs will be importable likewiſe at a like reduction, and its manufacture, though thriving is not ſo eſtabliſhed as that we can pronounce, it can ſafely bear the reduction.

Haberdaſhery, hats, hardware, millinery, paper ſtained, pottery, ſadlery, and manufactured leather, are all to be importable on a reduction of duty, no where leſs than 2l. 14s. 1d. per cent. Britiſh, and in ſome inſtances more, and the import of ſadlery has encreaſed rapidly.

There will be a reduction too in the protection of the *ſilk manufacture*, it is a declining one, and it is a wretched impolicy to forward its decline by leſſening any aſſiſtance it receives from the preſent duties.

The article of *ſteel* muſt have crept in by miſtake, for if we believe Mr. Wetherall's paper, now on the table, it is claſſed among the articles, not at preſent ſubject to a duty of 10l. per cent. ſo that it is in the ſingular predicament, though a material of manufacture, of having the duty on its import raiſed.

But of all the articles the one that affects us moſt is *cotton*. By the petition preſented a few hours ago, it appears that the preſent duties on plain callicoes may be eſtimated at between 40 and 50 per cent. of the value; on plain muſlins about 35 per cent. and on coloured, or worked, or figured, very little leſs. We have, I believe, about 13 cotton mills erected, at great expence, capable of working 500,000lb. of cotton.

We

We have many factories built, and much capital veſted all on the faith of theſe duties, giving a very extended employment to the induſtrious poor, and all are to be ruined by this fatal project.

'Tis true, the noble lord has juſt now ſtated that he means to alter the propoſition ſo as to reduce this valuable and eſſential protection of our cotton manufactures *by degrees*. He will not deſtroy them all at once, but allow them gradually to die. Inſtead of a ſudden he will indulge them with a lingering death, and he is inclined to this, he ſays, from a converſation with one or two manufacturers laſt week. I cannot help remarking here the ample proof, which this change of his opinion gives us, of what muſt be our ſituation under a parliament in Weſtminſter. The noble lord, with the moſt able aſſiſtants from hence, the head of the law, of the exchequer and of the revenue, framed theſe propoſitions in England, and I will do them the juſtice to believe, with the moſt ſerious intention not to let this one be injurious to Ireland, yet the moment he talks to a manufacturer here, he ſees and admits its error. Need we have ſtronger evidence to ſupport the aſſertion I have often made, that no parliament out of Ireland, however well intentioned, can have local knowledge, or obtain information ſufficiently to underſtand our intereſts? that an Iriſh parliament is alone equal to it, and that in removing it we remove our natural and only capable guardians, and with them our trade, our manufactures and our proſperity?

But to return, is it not clear, that whether this manufacture is to be doomed to a ſudden or to a lingering death, every man muſt look to draw his capital out of

it as ſpeedily as he can, and if not before the gradual reduction to 10 per cent. certainly before the total extinction of that 10 per cent. which is to take place in 20 years? and it is as evident that no capital will come from England to a manufacture ſo circumſtanced, and that if it requires ſo high a per centage to protect it againſt Engliſh import, it can never find a market from hence in England.

The laſt article in the noble lord's ſchedule is *ſtockings*. Will gentlemen believe that ſilk ſtockings now pay on import 4s. 8d. a pair, and by this reduction to 10 per cent. on the value they would probably pay only from 1s. to 1s. 6d. Need I aſk what will become of our hoſiers?

I ſhould tire the houſe with mentioning all the manufactures which will be affected; they will be ſeen in the paper No. 9, ſigned by Mr. Wetherall, wherever 12l. 14s. 1d. is mentioned as the duty—they are upwards of 70 in number, (ſee Appendix) and the noble lord avows that the loſs of revenue by taking off duties and lowering duties to 10l. per cent. will be 32,000l. a year. Protecting dnties then to theamount of 32,000l. a year are to be withdrawn. Is there a man can hear this without ſurpriſe at the attempt, and ſorrow for the individuals whoſe property will be affected? Their melancholy apprehenſions muſt be truly pitiable—they may well upbraid us for all our patriotic endeavours to induce them to ſpend their capitals in the buſineſs, and for our now abandoning them to ruin.

When I talk of the commercial propoſitions of 1785 I allude to thoſe which are in your journals, and which received the unanimous approbation of this houſe, thoſe

from

from Britain never were propoſed for aſſent or diſſent in this houſe. I dont allude to them nor to the bill which followed, and which never was read a ſecond time. Every man concerned knows how long I contended to uphold our own Iriſh propoſitions, in which I maintained the *ſtatu quo* in reſpect to the duties, and of courſe preſerved all the exiſting protections, and particularly thoſe by which the cotton has ſince flouriſhed?

Beſides, the caſe is very different now. The Iriſh parliament was then to continue, and could prevent any evil which might follow; both parliaments, both the contracting parties were to continue, but this change is to be made a fundamental part of a perpetual ſyſtem without our parliament to watch over us and without a power of the united parliament to alter; for the advocates of the meaſure contend, they cannot alter any article.

But this is not the only variation in the propoſed ſyſtem, from thoſe propoſitions which I ſhall be ever proud of the ſhare I had in forming. They provided for an effectual preference in each kingdom againſt ſimilar articles from foreign ſtates, thereby ſtrengthening the ſecurity for the Iriſh linens againſt the foreign in the Britiſh market—theſe are wholly ſilent on that head.

They left to both parliaments the power of duties on imports of foreign articles, or foreign materials of manufacture for home uſe; theſe take away that power from Ireland by taking away its parliament.

I look to iron particularly in this view—our infant manufacture requires us to continue its low duty on import

import of 12s. 6d. the ton. The duty on import into Britain is above 3l. and it is not impoſſible but that from want of local information, the plauſible argument might prevail in the united parliament, that in one and the ſame Empire the duties on the import of a material ſhould be the ſame throughout, and thereby ours might be raiſed to theirs.

Raw ſilk is ſituated in the ſame way, our import duty being leſs than theirs.

As to the *corn trade* it is exempted from all ſpecific change, and leſt wholly to the control of the united parliament. Whatever ſecurity we may juſtly look to in the integrity of that parliament, we have none in its power of local information. The bounties to Britain which exiſt, and the conditional prohibitions on import from thence, have raiſed agriculture in this kingdom. This diſtinct intereſt may happen to be miſunderſtood, or a wiſh may prevail to try the extinguiſhment of the regulations, and financial views for ſaving revenue may further that wiſh.

One article of the propoſitions I cannot underſtand the motives for, *hops, ſalt and coals* are ever to continue ſubject to the preſent duties on import into Ireland.

The greater part of the duty on *hops* aroſe from a meaſure which I laboured much to accompliſh, the getting Britain to draw back her exciſe duty on export, and to let us as the conſumers impoſe it on import. Suppoſe Great Britain at a future day to lay down her exciſe duty, we cannot under this article, lower our importduty, which was the equivalent, and

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of courſe the Britiſh beer, which is to come in duty free, may have a decided preference over our own.

As to *Salt*, it is ſo great an article of general uſe, and particularly among the poor, that its duties ought not to be the ſubject of perpetual and unalterable compact, eſpecially when we conſider the ſtate of thoſe duties. It is but two years ſince they were raiſed, from *one Shilling* a ton on rock-ſalt, to *three pounds*—Gentlemen ſtare! but the fact is ſo, it was a wondrous riſe; the ton is valued at the cuſtom-houſe at ten ſhillings and ſix pence, and may be worth fifteen ſhillings perhaps. Here then is a duty of between 4 and 500 per cent. on the value, of only two years continuance, to be made perpetual without redemption, and this duty being impoſed to operate as an exciſe duty on the conſumption of white ſalt, its continuance is as abſurd to be provided for, as if we were to provide that an internal exciſe of equal amount ſhould continue for ever, contrary to what would be the caſe, even under theſe articles, if it were now an exciſe duty.

White ſalt is raiſed from 12*l.* 6*d.* a ton, to 4*l.* duty on import.

Coals are now exportable from Britain, at a duty there of 9*d.* per ton, which is to ceaſe, but their duties here are to remain for ever. Where manufactures are eſtabliſhed near the coaſt in Great Britain, the coaſting duty has been removed I believe, at leaſt I recollect two acts, one for their going free to the copper works in Wales, the other for their going free to parts of Cornwall, and ſince 1793, there has been no coaſting duty to Scotland; it was exchanged for another on account of its prejudicial effects, but had the Scotch articles of Union, been peremptory like this one, it never could have been altered.

One

One curious circumſtance attending the coal regulation is, the manner in which Dublin will be affected, you will find in No. 9, that the duty on import there, is one ſhilling and eight pence four-fifths per ton, and only nine pence halfpenny to the reſt of Ireland—the reaſon is, that there exiſts a local duty of one ſhilling per ton, for the internal improvement of the city, and this local tax is blended with the general duty on the articles, and its perpetual continuance is inforced though Mr. Witherall returned it as being more than ten per cent. on the value. I am perſuaded this was not intended, but it is another inſtance to prove the impoſſibility of ſufficient local information being procured to aſſiſt local deliberation in Britain for Ireland, and how eſſential the retaining our own parliament, is to our intereſts.

The next article I ſhall notice, is *Sail Cloth*, and the noble lord has dwelt largely on the benefits its manufactures is to receive, by being deemed Britiſh, and of courſe admitted to equal pre-emption with Britiſh in the navy, and equal uſe in the firſt ſails of every Britiſh trading veſſel, he forgets that this regulation to which we have every claim of right and juſtice, was intended and promiſed if this Union had never been thought of; and I muſt remark that Iriſh ſail cloth is now, and has been long free into Britain, and the great meaſure which injured our manufacture of it has been done away three years ago, by Great Britain diſcontinuing her bounties on its export to Ireland, only part therefore of the injurious regulations under which our ſail cloth laboured, remains for this article to remove, and we have a right to expect it without a Union.

The

The free import of *wool* from Britain which thre propoſitions allows, is cried up as a great ſacrifice made by Britain and a great gain to us ;—I acknowledge its liberality, and that it was not included in the commercial propoſitions, of 1785 at the ſame time that I cannot ſee its particular beneficial effects. Our great import of woollen manufacture conſiſts chiefly of the finer cloths, in which Spaniſh wool is ſolely or principally uſed, we cannot expect any or at leaſt very little wool fit for them from Britain, and I apprehend the freight on it would be much higher on account of its bulk than five one-half per cent, which the noble lord ſtates to be the general charge on all articles from Britain to Ireland· Its freight is ſo expenſive that I am well informed an attempt to ſend it from Dublin to Cork coaſtways was abandoned, and it was ſent by land. Spaniſh wool is as free to us without duty as to Britain—yet we manufacture a very ſmall part of our conſumption of ſuperfine cloathing.

If the coarſer wool ſhould come, which might be principally uſed in carpeting, you will recollect that theſe ſame propoſitions take off the preſent protecting duties on them of 12*l.* 14*s.* 1 per cent. If wool in Britain ſhould again fall to the low price it uſed to be at, compared with ours, we might poſſibly import; the conſequence would be lowering the price of our own, which however beneficial to the clothier or carpet maker, might not be reliſhed well by the grazier; but the whole of it promiſes to be ſo trifling that it is not worth further obſervation.

The article of *Linſeed Oil*, deſerves remark, the deties on it, except the hereditary, are appropriated to the linen manufactures, and were propoſed by me, many years ago, in order to encourage the ſaving of

Iriſh

Iriſh flax ſeed, their produce was accordingly given by the truſtees in premiums ou linſeed oil made of Iriſh ſeed—the object of this double encouragement by protection and by bounty; was to provide a conſumption for the Iriſh ſeed, which might not be fit for ſowing and in general by the ſaving ſeed, to ſecure a ſtock which might anſwer for ſowing, in caſe of a dearth of foreign ſeed. Theſe articles do away this, I am perſuaded, unintentionally.

To ſum up the whole of the commercial regulations, they lower all protecting duties above ten per cent to ten per cent, and remove all others, operating thereby injuriouſly on above 70 articles of manufacture, and ruining entirely the cotton buſineſs. The propoſitions paſſed by this houſe in 1785, reduced none and preſerved them all.

Theſe ſecure no preference for linen or any articles in the Britiſh market againſt foreign produce, and take from the linen as I ſaid before the ſecurity of our compact for that purpoſe, thoſe of 1785, enſured an effectual preference. This is not a time for me to trouble the committee with ſtating that compact; the leading features of it may be ſeen in your journals, in a report made by Sir Lucius OBrien in 1773.

Theſe terms make perpetual the new and exceſſive duties in Ireland on ſalt; they render unalterable the duties on hops and coals; thoſe of 1785 left an Iriſh parliament with powers to reduce or remove them at pleaſure.

Theſe leave our brewery unprotected, allowing only a countervailing duty, as if our exciſe on beer continued, which is another inſtance of the want of Iriſh information in England. Thoſe of 1785 left the exiſting protection.

Theſe

Theſe make no proviſion as to the retaining our low duties on the import of raw materials. Thoſe of 1785, gave our parliament full power over them, and yet the noble lord has ſtated that the propoſitions now before the committee muſt be approved by every man, who ſupported thoſe of 1785.

I did not only approve of thoſe in 1785, but I was the chief framer of them and theſe are ſo unlike them, that I diſclaim all connexion with them.——The noble loard boaſts of the ſuperior natural advantage of Ireland for a re-export trade—may I aſk whoſe capital is to carry it on; it is of all trades the leaſt beneficial to a country, and fit only for the ſuperfluity of capital, after what can be employed in home-trade and manufacture, or agriculture. The Britiſh merchant muſt prefer ſtoring his goods near his home within his reach——but if we have thoſe natural advantages, does this propoſition offer any inducement, which the preſent laws don't afford? he muſt know it does not. The act of exciſe allows the bonding, which our own laws have reſtrained in many articles, and the act of cuſtom provides for eſtabliſhing the free ports.

I have now gone through this curious detail of commercial inquiry and it only remains to examine the beneficial effect which he ſays it will have on the Iriſh revenues.

It takes off as I have ſtated, 32,000l. a year of protecting duties, duties which raiſed revenue not on Iriſh goods, but on Britiſh in favour of Iriſh.—It is to remove 44,000l. a year paid on the export of our cattle, hides, tallow, butter, beef, pork, and linen yarn. As to theſe latter duties in general, I will call to the recollection of the committee, that in the year 1780, when I propoſed a bill in imitation of that of Britain in 1722—with a ſweeping clauſe to take off all duties on the export of all

goods of the growth produce or manufacture of Ireland, except on ſeveral enumerated articles, ſo as to do away the 5 per cent. general duty on export by the act of Charles II. I conſulted many eminent merchants who dealt largely in theſe articles, who all conſidered the duties on them, as no incumbrance to the ſale, that they had exiſted ſince 1660 without injuring the trade, and were never felt as in any way diſcouraging it, and accordingly I let the duties continue.

They are 1s. a barrel on beef, worth from 4l. to 4l. 10s. —1s. 6d. on a barrel of pork worth from 4l. 10s. od. to 5l. and 1s. 6d. on a Cwt. of butter, now worth 5l. ——the percentage of this duty has been gradually decreaſing as the value has gradually riſen. Thoſe three articles produced 29,818l.*

The export of beef to Great Britain was far greater in the laſt year than in any former one, and the whole of the laſt ſix years exceeds the amount of any former ſix years, ſo that this duty has not affected the trade.

The export of butter was checked laſt year by the rebellion, but its export to Britain has been greater in the eight preceding years than in the ſame ſpace of time before——and the export of pork though leſſened laſt year a little by the ſame cauſe, was greater than ever in the year to March 1798—and has been in a gradual progreſs of encreaſe for many years——to remove all theſe duties therefore may be deemed a favour to Great Britain, who pays them in the price ſhe gives for the goods, but not a conſideration for Ireland, who muſt

*Beef, ... 4,638l.
Butter, ... 16,198l.
Pork, ... 8,982l.
29,818l.

muſt raiſe taxes in their ſtead, and probably could not find any ſo little liable to be felt. I do not wiſh to be underſtood to ſay that that favour never ſhould be given to Britain, but the Iriſh parliament can do it, without a Union, whenever it may be adviſable.

As to the duties on live cattle, which have produced 7,631l. they have been raiſed ſince 1793 from 1s. to 6s.* a head to diſcourage their export, that they might go abroad in a more advantageous ſtate, of pork, beef, leather and tallow. And the tax on hides, ſmall as it is to Britain, being only four-pence or one third of what it is to other countries, would be beneficial to our tanning trade, if it operated to prevent export.

The revenue raiſed on the export of tallow is 1s. 6d. the Ct. it produces about 850l. only, and we import above half as much as we export, ſo that if it did check the export, we ſhould not ſuffer.

The laſt article this revenue riſes on, is linen yarn, which at one halfpenny a lb. produces 3,840l, ſterling, and if this duty tends to render it dearer abroad, than it is at home, no man will ſay that it can be beneficial to our manufacture, to take it off. For what then are theſe alterations deſired? for Ireland? no, but to give at our expence to Britain proviſions, cattle and yarn, cheaper than ſhe now receives them, and ſo little cheaper, that hardly any one there would thank us for the regulation, though it takes from us a revenue of 44,000l. a year which we muſt replace.

Let us now ſee the return we are to receive for voluntarily complimenting Great Britain with this ſure revenue of 76,000l. a year, raiſed on her and not felt by us. In the firſt place, 17,000l. a year duty paid in Britain on the export of coal to us, which I agree is a fair

* Duty in 1793, - - 1s. 0d.
Raiſed in 1794, - to 3s. 0d.
———in 1799, - to 6s. 0d.

fair and effectual return as far as it goes——9000l. a year duties retained in England, on ſubſidy goods, if theſe goods pay the ſame duties in Ireland on import thence as from the place of growth, Great Britain retaining them, pays a bounty to their amount for encouraging our direct trade to the place of growth, and would be wiſe therefore in retaining them no longer—— and if we forbear to their amount, in laying as heavy a duty on the import from her as from their native country, ſhe is obliged to us, and ought not to retain them leſt any want of revenue here, might make us ceaſe that forbearance.

The next article is a curious offer——58,000l. a year, from the Eaſt India company, being our $\frac{2}{17}$ of 500,000l. a year which that company covenanted to pay, when her new charter was granted in 1793, one penny of which I believe ſhe has not yet paid, and a ſhare of which we ſhould have been conſidered in juſtice entitled to, without regard to Union, when we confirmed that charter the ſame year.

But let me tell you that the payment of it may be poſtponed to eternity, if the lords of the treaſury ſhall deem it inconvenient to the affairs of the company to pay it, for they have a power by the act to do ſo———and let me aſk the noble lord, why he has omitted to allot to us a ſhare of the twelve millions to the ſinking fund, and of the ſurplus to the conſolidated fund, provided for out of their profits by the ſame act. He nods aſſent, but will it or any part of it come before the time that our proportion of contribution is to ceaſe?——it will be inoperative afterwards.

By this exchange then, if I can call it ſuch, we give up a good and certain revenue of 76,000l. a year which we

we raiſe on export to Britain, and ſhe gives us up a ſimilar revenue of 26,000l. only—for the remainder we are ſent to India to look, and this is what the noble lord calls, the beneficial effect of his precious ſyſtem to the Iriſh revenue it is ſimply this that we are to find a new tax to the amount of 58,000l. a year, to advance it for the Eaſt India company.

Upon the whole then of finance, revenue and commerce, review every article, and be they good, or be they bad, I defy any man to ſay that there is one article to which an Iriſh parliament is incompetent; or one to which a united parliament is not leſs adequate, inaſmuch as the arrangement of duties and of trade, between the two kingdoms requires, a quick and ready knowledge of the local circumſtances of this kingdom, which can only be effectually obtained by a reſident legiſlature. And if any man thinks there is any one article in all the arrangement ſtated, which is beneficial to this kingdom, I aſk him, why not enact it now, or why poſtpone it to a united parliament?

Having now diſpatched commerce and finance, the next conſideration is, the conſtitutional effects of the propoſed arrangement, and I will ſtate without fear of contradiction, that in every ſtep it makes, it breaks in upon ſome known and eſtabliſhed conſtitutional principle; it is one courſe of conſtitutional and dangerous innovation from beginning to end.

As to the upper houſe, it creates a ſort of mongrel peer, half lord, half commoner, neither the one or the other complete, and yet enough of each to remind you of the motley mixture. Every body knows or ſhould know,

know that by the original and uninterrupted conſtitution of parliament a lord cannot interfere in the election of a commoner, yet here he is not only to interfere, but may be a candidate, and may ſit and act as a commoner. The 28 choſen lords are to ſit for *life*, though they are only repreſentatives, thus counteracting one great principle, that repreſentatives ſhall only act for a time limited, acknowledged by the ſeptennial and octennial bills, and by the articles of the Scotch Union in reſpect to their lords.

Further, with this ſeat for life to the choſen lords, what is to become of the remaining peerages, perhaps nearer 200 than 100 in number? they now are legiſlators; paſs theſe articles, they ceaſe inſtantly to be ſo, they will be the only ſubjects in Ireland incapable of acting as legiſlators, a degradation ruinous to the nobility. Every heir to a title mediately or immediately, now looks in his ſtudies and his education to qualify himſelf for the high duties of a legiſlator, of an hereditary counſellor to the crown. This fatal meaſure of election for life leaves ſo little hope and ſo little chance, that all inducement to improvement, to education, to ſtudy the intereſts of his country, is done away. You depreſs the ſpirit and enervate the exertions of all the riſing nobility of the land. Nay, further, by a ſtrange ſort of abſurdity, the meaſure in allowing him as a commoner to ſit for a Britiſh ſeat, and denying him to do ſo for an Iriſh one, admits this monſtrous poſition, that in the country, where his property, his connexions, and reſidence is, he ſhall not be choſen a legiſlator; but in the one where he is wholly a ſtranger, he may—and you add this certain conſequence, that you will induce a reſidence of the Iriſh nobility in Britain, where they may

may be elected commoners, and muſt of courſe endeavour to gain acquaintance, ſolicit intereſt, and make themſelves known to the electors, thereby encreaſing the number of your abſentees, and gradually weaning the men of largeſt fortune from an acquaintance or a connexion with their native country.

As to the Commons this fatal Union will not be leſs unconſtitutional. It reduces their number from 300 to 100, but the conſtitution has pronounced the accumulated wiſdom and knowledge of 300 to be neceſſary to legiſlature, and to preſerve the balance of power eſtabliſhed among the three branches; and it not only commits a violation on the number but on the qualifications. One great principle is, that in the Commons all ſpecies of property is repreſented, and the wiſdom of the whole encreaſed by a mixture of country gentlemen, merchants, lawyers, and men of all profeſſions. This meaſure ſhuts the door againſt commercial men and againſt the law. A merchant who may ſpare his time with eaſe near his own home to enlighten this aſſembly with the reſult of his experience and enquiries, will not be able to deſert his buſineſs for months in the year and reſide in another kingdom. Will any of thoſe lawyers whom I ſee oppoſite to me give up their profeſſions to attend the united parliament? No man can do juſtice to his client and attend only one or two terms in the year.

The nation muſt therefore loſe the benefit of the talents and conſtitutional knowledge of all the eminent members of that profeſſion; and as if theſe innovations were not ſufficient, the miſerable remains of this parliament thus reduced and degraded, is to be

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ſent to Weſtminſter to another kingdom, where it will be too far removed from its own to receive information for guarding or promoting its intereſt; it may learn imperial rights there, as ſome gentlemen ſay, but it may neglect its own.

Need I mention the caſe of controverted elections? Securing the purity of elections can alone preſerve the purity of parliament; and ſo conſcious are the promoters of this Union that juſtice cannot be adminiſtered by a trial in England, that they propoſe to ſend a deputation from our quota of members to try the merits in Ireland. But how can they try? Where will be the power to enforce the attendance of witneſſes, to puniſh for prevarication or breach of privilege, yet you all know how often this houſe is applied to to interpoſe its authority, and even to enforce the attendance of each individual of the committee. To delegate power to any court, to interfere, is a direct violation of every doctrine and practice on the ſubject. If then it is impracticable to have the trial here, and it muſt be with the parliament in Weſtminſter, few men, however juſt their claim, will undertake the expence. The ſheriffs will in fact nominate, or rather the government who appoint the ſheriffs. If any man doubts how ſheriffs may act, let him look to the conduct of many on the preſent meaſure how they have refuſed their conſtitutional duty of calling their counties together to take the ſenſe of the freeholders on this great queſtion, and by whoſe inſtigation did the generality of them do ſo?

One remark, and a very ſtrong one, ariſes on the moment. The noble lord in bringing the committee, to Ireland acknowledges the local difficulties which will prevent

juſtice

juſtice from being attainable in Weſtminſter by enquiry there; and if it is ſo as to juſtice, does not the ſame reaſoning go more ſtrongly to every enquiry on commercial ſubjects and local intereſts, with this difference, that in the one caſe the expence of the individuals giving evidence is to be paid them, but in the other they are to volunteer the journey and the coſt at their own ſuit. Muſt not the noble lord acknowledge, if to attain juſtice the merits of an Iriſh election cannot be tried in the imperial parliament, neither can all the other objects of enquiry neceſſary to legiſlature be obtained by that parliament, and a parliament at Weſtminſter will be as inefficient to the one as to the other.

All theſe declare at leaſt, that the noble lord and his adviſers are by their own admiſſion 20 years too ſoon producing this meaſure; for 20 years ſeems to be their ſtandard for ſuppoſing the intereſts in the debt, revenues and commerce may be leſs ſeparate than they are, and I adviſe him moſt ſincerely to withdraw it, until theſe 20 years ſhall have elapſed, and until the events of time ſhall have completely identified every intereſt, if ever they ſhall do ſo, and an entire Union of the nations, and not a Union of parliaments ſolely ſhall of itſelf occur, and require only the form of law to ſanction it.

Need I ſtate the violent deſtruction of all chartered rights which will attend this meaſure? Rights veſted in ſome bodies for 600 years, and always exerciſed for the benefit of the ſtate, and which ſometimes have proved the great ſafeguard and ſecurity of the conſtitution.

One conſequence is too ſtriking to be paſſed over. What would you think of the man who would be hardy enough to riſe in this houſe and propoſe to make

all taxes perpetual? Yet this muſt be a neceſſary ſtep towards the meaſure.

But will the noble lord tell me, why he has provided for a change in the quantum of contribution, becauſe it reſts on the varying change of our relative proportion of trade and of conſumption, and though he eſtimates the number of repreſentatives on that proportion, joined with the comparative population which is alſo always varying, why he has omitted to provide for the encreaſe of our repreſentative proportion likewiſe? If the Union enriches us, the repreſentative proportion ought to increaſe as population, trade and wealth encreaſe.

As to the third branch of the legiſlature—the king. This meaſure limits his prerogative in making peers, and it takes from him the benefit of all thoſe hereditary councellors which the conſtitution has attached to him, except the few who may be choſen.

Thus does it, like every other ill conſid ered wanton project, teem with evils; it injures revenue and trade, and in every regulation violates all the known principles of the conſtitution in the lords, the commons, and the king. It is called an Union, but it don't deſerve the name, it is any thing you pleaſe but what it profeſſes to be; a real Union is a full and entire Union of the two nations—this is a Union of the two parliaments only—there can be no Union of the nations while diſtinct intereſts exiſt, and every line almoſt of the plan declares the diſtinctneſs of intereſt in revenue, in commerce, in purſe in conſtitution. The Union does nothing if it does not identify, but there can be no identification with diſtinct intereſts; one purſe can be managed by one parliament, but two

purſes

purſes require two parliaments. You provide for the ſeparation of the debts of each, and the diſcharging theſe debts, becauſe the intereſt of each nation is ſeparate in them. You acknowledge a diſtinct intereſt in the current expences, becauſe you provide a diſtinct contribution for defraying them.

The noble lord laments that the different ſituations of the manufactures, and the different burthens of debt prevent a complete identity, and he is right: it effectually does—but he not only acknowledges it to exiſt now, but his plan provides for its future continuance, for with regard to debt, proviſion is made for Ireland, incurring debt at all future time for current expence when England may not, and the debt ſo incurred is to continue ſeparate.

The duties on foreign goods, as to drawbacks are to conſtitute ſeparate purſes, and ſeparate accounts of credit to be kept.

The duties on the channel trade are to continue, why? Avowedly becauſe the intereſt of the manufacturer is totally diſtinct, and by a curious fatality in this meaſure—proviſion is made for rouſing all theſe diſtinctneſſes and bringing them forward into diſcuſſion at ſtated times to all eternity, without a diſtinct parliament for the people intereſted to ſpeak through,—what an unceaſing fund for keeping alive old jealouſies and provoking new ones!

The corn regulations too are exempted, for the very reaſon that they are diſtinct and cannot be identified, and here let me aſk you, if we had now a united parliament with the preſent high price of corn in England, and our regulations had been changed as to our export, by that parliament, do you believe any corn would by this time have been left in Ireland; the anſwer muſt be, no,

and you would have had no parliament to allay the diſcontent of the people.

Even in a conſtitutional view, theſe propoſitions declare diſtinct national intereſts and provide for their continuance. The Iriſh peerage is to be kept diſtinct to all future time by the power of creating new Iriſh peers—why is this?—Scotland was too wiſe to allow it, or to allow diſtinctneſs of debt or diſtinctneſs of tax to remain, ſhe wanted and ſhe was capable of receiving a full and entire Union of the nations. The miniſter propoſes as to Ireland a Union of parliaments only, any other he ſees impracticable. Talk to eternity on the ſubject, the real queſtion is, what I have always ſtated it, *parliament or no parliament.*—Union is a word to deceive. If the influence of the crown is not the real cauſe for continuing the Iriſh peerage, why ſhall not every peer hereafter to be created, be a peer of the empire, and when the preſent number ſhall be reduced to the quota of 28, let them become peers of the empire, and elections ceaſe.

Why is a diſtinct intereſt to be created by allowing Iriſhmen, I mean Iriſh peers, to be capable of fulfilling the truſt of repreſenting Engliſh conſtituents, but not of repreſenting Iriſh? Or why are Engliſh commoners deemed unfit to try Iriſh elections, when all are ſaid to be members of one parliament, where the intereſt and duty of every member is, by the conſtitution general and not local? And why in the arrangement is the whole diminution to be made from the Iriſh parliament? Why ſhall Britain retain all her commoners and all her lords, while the lords here are to be reduced to 28, and the commoners to 100? Is it acknowledged that the ſeparate intereſt of Britain is ſo very diſtinct?

If

If I were to conſider only the ſeparate exchequer, and ſeparate purſe which thoſe propoſitions acknowledge throughout, I ſhould even on theoretic ground reject the Union. The purſe in the hands of the commons, is the eſſence of the nation's liberty, and is the conſtitutional balance againſt undue exerciſe of the prerogative. I will never part with it willingly, while I have ſenſe to feel and know the value of the Britiſh conſtitution and Britiſh connexion.

The next part of the ſubject which I ſhall take up, is that which concerns the religious differences.—The right hon. gentleman next the noble lord, aſks if I have authority to ſay, what will become of the religious queſtion, ſhould a Union be rejected? I aſk him by what authority, he joins the religious queſtion he alludes to, with the Union—it has nothing to do with the Union, except, as it is introduced by the promoters of the meaſure, to alarm and divide the country. Is the Iriſh parliament to be ſo degraded, that it cannot diſcuſs every queſtion of Iriſh concern, and that a diſtant parliament ſitting in a diſtant land, is more adequate to it, or will give more content by its deciſion? —No, ſir, we are not ſo loſt to all duty, to all love of our country, to all integrity, that we are not to be truſted with the concerns of Ireland.

I will tell the right hon. gentleman, why I do not join that queſtion with the Union. The Union ſeeks to take away our parliament, our freedom, and our proſperity; the catholick is equally a native of Ireland, equally bound by duty, by inclination to his country, he ſees with us the danger of the attack, and joins with the proteſtant, to prevent its approach, and ſave

the conſtitution; he is wiſe in doing ſo—all differences are loſt, they are aſleep in this common cauſe, he joins heart to heart with his fellow ſubjects, to oppoſe the common enemy, this damnable, deſtructive, and I had almoſt ſaid, deceitful meaſure; if I were to ranſack every dictionary in the Engliſh language, I could not find words ſtrong enough to expreſs my abhorrence of the plan, or my dread of its fatal conſequences.

You talk of its reſtoring tranquillity—it is but talk—will taking men of property out of the country do it, will a plan full of the ſeeds of jealouſy and diſcontent effect it? Will depriving a nation of the liberty which it has acquired, and to which it is devoted, enſure content?—If religious jealouſies diſturb its quiet, are they to be allayed by a Britiſh parliament?—No, ſir, leave our own concerns to our own parliament, we are equal to their management—and we will not yield in wiſdom, liberality, patriotiſm, or firmneſs, to any parliament, that can ſit in Britain, formed on new ſpeculations, unknown to the conſtitution.

But I aſk, if thoſe jealouſies have diſturbed our quiet, who rouſed them? I anſwer, that bench!—not the noble lord, but thoſe who then ſat on that bench—Britiſh, not Iriſh councils rouſed them! and Britiſh, not Iriſh councils now propoſe this Union.

Let us look back to 1782—Iriſh ſpirit, and Britiſh liberality removed all jealouſies at that period, not one has occurred ſince between the kingdoms, and Britiſh councils now come forward to undo the meaſures of

1782—

1782—to rouſe by this ill-timed project, publick apprehenſion, and to put us into the ſituation we were in before that period, when continued jealouſies retarded our proſperity and diſtracted our tranquillity.

Review the whole meaſure, it leaves to us every appendage of a kingdom, except what conſtitutes he eſſence of independance, a reſident parliament, —ſeparate ſtate, ſeparate eſtabliſhment, ſeparate exchequer, ſeparate debt, ſeparate courts, ſeparate laws, the lord lieutenant, and the caſtle; all remain, we ſhall become a colony on the worſt of terms, paying a ſettled ſyſtem of contribution, to be levied by laws not of our own making,—and what are the benefits in return? None pretended, except in trade and revenue, which I have ſhewn you to be the reverſe of benefits—but if they were ever ſo great, I would ſpurn the offer, to be purchaſed by our liberty, neither revenue or trade will remain where the ſpirit of liberty ceaſes to be their foundation, and nothing can proſper in a ſtate which gives up its freedom—I declare moſt ſolemnly, that if England could give us all her revenue, and all her trade, I would not barter for them, the free conſtitution of my country. Our wealth, our properties, our perſonal exertions are all devoted to her ſupport—our freedom is our inheritance, and with it we cannot barter.

But, if I diſlike the whole of the meaſure for its miſchief and imperfections, I reprobate ſtill more the means propoſed for effecting it. When the noble lord mentioned *compenſation for the boroughs*, he ſaw the feelings of the houſe, and I was happy to obſerve that in his printed ſpeech which he has mentioned, it

was

was omitted. I thought the indignation which appeared, had induced him to abandon it—but I now find from his right honourable friend, that it is not given up. Were I ſpeaking in another parliament, I ſhould impute the hardineſs which mentioned ſuch a baſe and humiliating bribe, to a previous knowledge that it had received the approbation of many members——what is the plain language of it—I am to propoſe a meaſure by which 200 of you are to loſe your ſeats——many of you have bought them and others claim a right in them, you ſhall not ſuffer, the public ſhall pay you for ſelling yourſelves and your conſtituents, and the price you receive ſhall become the purchaſe money for your ſelling your country afterwards. It is a moſt monſtrous unconſtitutional offer. Do you publickly avow that borough repreſentation is a private property, and do you confirm that avowal by the government becoming the purchaſers?

The right honourable gentleman ſays it cannot be a bribe to corrupt, becauſe it is to be diſtributed to both ſides of the houſe without diſtinction—I know ſir, as well as he does, that this houſe is above corruption, but ſuppoſe we were in another houſe, where ſuch an offer might corrupt——Thoſe who oppoſe a meaſure which is to deſtroy the boroughs, cannot take the money as a bribe, becauſe their vote goes to preſerve not to deſtroy them; but all thoſe who ſupport the meaſure may take the money as ſuch, becauſe by their vote they deſtroy their borough, and the money is the compenſation for that vote or in other words, the bribe, the profligate and diſgraceful bribe.

Suppoſe

Suppoſe the ſcheme capable of influencing members in the commons houſe of that parliament, which I don't ſay it is in any houſe and that there were 40 county members againſt and 20 for any meaſure, and alſo 130 borough members for and 80 againſt it—admitting that all borough members are to be influenced which I by no means allow; 50 more are to be worked upon on one ſide than the other, and there is the majority of fifty.——— I truſt we ſhall hear no more of it—and that the noble lord feels how ill he has been adviſed, in even harbouring the thought.

Does he think this will go down in England, and that the miniſtry can acknowledge boroughs ſaleable and to be private property here and not there, or that if by ſuch purchaſe we make what is called a reform here, they will be able to withſtand the precedent there? Nay more, with what reluctance muſt the Britiſh ſenate receive among them men delegated by perſons whom they may ſuſpect, however unjuſtly, of having ſold themſelves, their conſtituents and their country, openly and without ſhame?

When I talk of England I cannot avoid mentioning the effect this Union may have there. The late Lord Chatham is ſaid always to have objected to a Union, leſt the additional number of members from Ireland might alter the conſtitution of the houſe, and make it too unwieldy, or give too much weight to the democratic balance.

The Eaſt India bill in England was objected to, as giving too much influence to the miniſter, but all the the Eaſt India bills that were ever framed fell ſhort of

this meaſure. The influence which was extended to manage 300 will remain to manage 100; and if there be any to ſpare, it will be at the miniſter's diſpoſal, for the other ſide of the water.

In ſhort, excluſive of all its injuries to Ireland, it is big with danger to the old fabric of the Britiſh conſtitution, and if it falls, the empire goes with it, and they and we and all of us fall down.

Convinced as I am of the numerous and tremendous evils attendant on this meaſure to us, to the Britiſh conſtitution and to the empire, I muſt feel much regret that I am in a minority on the queſtion, but I have a ſtrong confidence that that minority will be ſucceſsful in defeating it. It is impoſſible to ſuppoſe that miniſters can think of proceeding againſt the determined ſenſe of the 120 members who compoſe it, two-thirds of the county members among them, and ſupported by the voice of the nation. Look on your table at the petitions from 25 counties, from 8 principal cities and towns, and from Dublin: 23 of the counties convened by legal notice have from time to time declared againſt it, and twenty of them unanimouſly. The whole mercantile intereſt deprecate it, wherever you go, whomever you talk with out of doors, you hear it reprobated univerſally. Every day brings new conviction of the abhorrence in which it is held throughout the kingdom.

It is the faſhion to ſay the country is agitated, and certain letters written by three members of parliament have been held forth as unconſtitutional and inflammatory. This is the firſt time I ever heard a wiſh in

gentlemen

gentlemen to know the real ſentiment of the freeholders by legal meetings to be convened by the ſheriffs, inſulted by ſuch appellations. The noble lord and his friends ſaid the ſenſe of the nation was with the meaſure. We doubted the fact, and the legal and undoubted right of our conſtituents to tell us their ſentiments could alone aſcertain it.

No, ſir, that letter did not irritate, it was intended to appeaſe: but I will tell you what has irritated, the reviving this ruinous meaſure after its rejection laſt year. The appeal nominal which the noble lord and his friends reſorted to againſt the deciſion of parliament—the refuſing county meetings, which are the conſtitutional mode of collecting the ſenſe of the freeholders, and ſending papers directed to no man, neither addreſs, nor petition, nor inſtructions, but a pledge of opinion through all the chapels, the markets, the public houſes, and even the loweſt cabins for ſignatures, and ſetting thoſe up againſt this houſe and the general voice of the kingdom, ſetting up the abſentee againſt the reſident, and reſting on his property, which he leaves to agents as a teſt of ſuperior attachment and ſuperior knowledge of the true intereſts of the kingdom.

I ſcarce need mention the unconſtitutional uſe to which the place bill has been perverted, and the offering this laſt and moſt monſtrous propoſal of applying the public money to purchaſe public rights from private individuals.

Theſe ſir, have irritated the people and agitated the country, and the ſooner the agitation is at an end the better, I ſhall therefore, before I ſit down, conclude

not

not by propoſing an amendment or giving a negative, but by moving that you leave the chair, in order to put a total end to the queſtion, for I believe there are many who vote for this meaſure becauſe they have not ſeen its miſchief, to them I ſpeak particularly, and I cannot but ſtrongly hope that before it finally quits the houſes, before the laſt vote is given, the ingenuous love of true liberty, that zeal for their native country which has at times burſt forth in this houſe and decided the nation's happineſs, will again ſpring forward, and that before they ſeal the doom of Ireland they will conſider how little the frowns and the favours of government ought to weigh in ſuch a cauſe; that they will recoil from the meaſure, and bleſs the patriotic ſtruggle which will have given them time to reflect, and allowed them to ſave themſelves from remorſe and their country from ruin.

I move, ſir, that you leave the chair.

The State of Duties at preſent, and as they will f
place, on the Import of the following Articles, of
Great Britain.

ARTICLES.		EXISTING DU in Brit. Mon			
		Amount in Britiſh Currency.			How
		l.	s.	d.	
Apparel		12	14	1	-
Arms		12	14	1	-
Beer and Ale			6	$6\frac{19}{20}$	per
Blankets coloured			2	$1\frac{3}{20}$	each
Blankets uncoloured			3	$4\frac{7}{10}$	each
Books bound		12	14	1	-
Books unbound				$2\frac{19}{13}$	per
Carpets				$2\frac{7}{10}$	per
Carpeting		12	14	1	-
Copper wrought		12	14	1	-
Copper unwrought			5	$5\frac{7}{10}$	per
Cotton Manufacture. White Calico		12	14	1	and
Cotton Manufacture. Coloured Calico			1	$4\frac{7}{10}$	per
Cotton Manufacture. Plain and Coloured		12	14	1	-
Cotton Manufacture. White Muſlin				$11\frac{1}{10}$	per
Cotton Manufacture. Coloured Muſlin		12	14	1	and
Glaſs. Cutlery		12	14	1	-
Glaſs. Earthen Ware		19	1	2	-
Glaſs. Bottles				$11\frac{1}{10}$	per
Glaſs. Being Vitriol				$1\frac{17}{20}$	each
Glaſs. Caſes for Windows			4	$3\frac{5}{20}$	per
Glaſs. Plates		12	14	1	-
Glaſs. Other Glaſs		12	14	1	-

DIX,

will ſtand, ſhould the Articles of Union take
es, of the growth produce or manufacture of

NG DUTIES, rit. Money.		DUTIES, ſhould the Union take place. In Iriſh money.
	How Charged if not per Centum.	l. s. d.
- -	-	10 o o per cent.
- -	-	free.
per Barrel	-	free.
each -	-	free.
each -	-	free.
- -	-	free.
per lb. -		free.
per ſquare Yard	-	free.
- -	-	free.
- -	-	10l. per cent.
per cwt. -	-	free.
and $7\frac{2}{5}$ per yard	-	10 o o
per yard -	-	10 o o
- -	-	10 o o
per yard -	-	10 o o
and $7\frac{2}{5}$ per yard	-	10 o o
- -	-	10 o o
- -	-	10 o o
per dozen	-	10 o o
each -	-	
per 24 leaves	-	
- -	-	
- -	-	

Groceries.	Sugar.	Candy	£	£.1
		Leaf		1
		White		1
Haberdashery.	I	wrought		0
	Thread.	Gold and Silver		0
		Sifters		0
		Unrated		12
		Whited brown		0
	Small parcels			12
	Men's hats			0
	Hats, beaver, wool, and hair			
	Hides Tanned } Hides untanned }		Various duties according t of the	
Hosiery.	Stockings.	Cotton		12
		Silk		0
		Silk and Cotton		12
		Silk and worſted		12
		Thread		12
	Sundries.	Of Silk		12
		Net Silk		12
	Jewellery			12
	Mathematical inſtruments			12
	Muſical inſtruments			12

£. 1	15	6	per cwt.	Free except a ccountervailing duty.	
1	15	0	per cwt.		
1	1	3 $\frac{7}{10}$	per cwt		
0	4	0 $\frac{13}{20}$	per 12 lbs.	£. 10	0 0
0	8	8 $\frac{4}{5}$	per lb.		
0	1	7 $\frac{2}{5}$			
12	14	1			
0	3	1 $\frac{17}{20}$	per lb.		
12	14	1			
0	2	4	each	10	0 0
	11	8 $\frac{1}{20}$	each		
cording to the defcription of the hide.				Free excepta countervailing duty, by way of Inland excife.	
12	14	1		10	0 0
0	4	8 $\frac{4}{5}$	per pair		
12	14	1			
12	14	1			
12	14	1			
12	14	1			
12	14	1			
12	14	1		10	0 0
12	14	1			
12	14	1			

APPENDIX.

	£. S. D.	£. S. D.
Iron and Hardware	- 12 14 1	10 0 0
Iron japanned	- 19 1 2	10 0 0
Ivory wrought, unrated	12 14 1	free.
—— if in combs	- 0 1 $2\frac{7}{20}$ per lb.	free.
Linen Floor Cloth	- 12 14 1	free.
Linen Oil Cloth	- 0 1 $0\frac{11}{20}$ per yd.	free.
Mats -	- 12 14 1	free.
Millinery-ware	- 12 14 1	10 0 0
Linseed Oil -	- 10 18 $6\frac{9}{20}$ per ton	free.
Rape Oil -	- 10 18 $6\frac{9}{20}$ per ton	
Train Oil -	- 1 3 $5\frac{11}{20}$ per ton	
Painters Colours	- 12 14 1	free.
Paper: Blue -	- 1 $2\frac{11}{20}$ per ream; $10\frac{3}{20}$ per 10lb.	free except countervailing duties for Inland, excise.
Brown -	- $4\frac{2}{5}$ per ream; $10\frac{3}{20}$ per 10lb.	
Card -	$3\frac{3}{5}$ per lb.	
Painted -	$3\frac{3}{5}$ per lb.	
Pressing -	2 $0\frac{19}{23}$ per 100 leaves; $\frac{12}{13}$ per lb.	
Writing -	$3\frac{3}{5}$ per lb.	
Perfumery -	- 12 14 1	free
Pewter wrought	- 9 $4\frac{17}{20}$ per cwt.	free
Tin Plates single of 300 plates	- 7 $0\frac{19}{20}$ pr 300 plts	free
Tin Plates double of 300 plates.	- 14 $1\frac{17}{20}$ pr 300 plts	free
Quilts -	- 12 14 1	free

APPENDIX.

	£.	S.	D.	£.	S.	D.
Rock Salt, per Ton,	2	15	$4\frac{13}{20}$	To Continue.		
White Salt, per Buſhel,	0	1	$10\frac{4}{20}$			
Sadlery, -	12	14	1	10	0	0
Silk Manufacture, per lb.	0	8	$10\frac{3}{20}$	10	0	0
Silk and Cotton mixed Manufacture,	12	14	1	Free.		
Silk and Worſted mixed,	12	14	1	Free.		
Soap, -	12	14	1	Free.		
Starch, per Cwt.	0	7	$7\frac{13}{20}$	Free.		
Stationary, -	12	14	1	Free.		
Upholſtery Ware,	12	14	1	Free.		
Braſs Wire, per Cwt.	0	11	$8\frac{15}{20}$	Free.		
Iron Wire, per Cwt.	0	5	$10\frac{2}{5}$	Free.		
Steel Wire, per lb.	0	0	4	Free.		
Wood Ware,	12	14	1	Free.		
Small Articles in General,	12	14	1	Free.		